The Laws

Lady Sheba

Your High Priestess

In the Magic Circle, the words, commands, and every wish of the High Priestess are law.

She is the earthly, living representative of our Gracious Goddess. She must be obeyed and respected in all things. She is Our Lady and above all others, a queen in the highest sense of the word.

All female coveners must curtsy whenever they come before her and say, "Blessed Be." All male coveners must bend the knee and give her a kiss on the right cheek and say, "Blessed Be."

Your High Priest

He is the earthly, living representative of the Great Horned God and in the Magic Circle, He commandeth the respect due to one who is a Magus, a Lord Counselor, and father.

The Laws

1. The Law was made and ardane of old.
2. The Law was made for the Wicca to advise and help in their troubles.
3. The Wicca should give due worship to the Gods and obey Their will, which They ardane, for it was made for the good of the Wicca, as the worship of the Wicca is good for the Gods. For the Gods love the brethren of the Wicca.
4. As a man loveth a woman by mastering her,

5. So the Wicca should love the Gods by mastering them.

6. And it is necessary that 0 (Magic Circle) which is the temple of the Gods, should be duly cast and purified that it may be a fit place for the Gods to enter.

7. And the Wicca should be properly prepared and purified to enter into the presence of the Gods.

8. With love and worship in their hearts, they shall raise power from their bodies to give power to the Gods.

9. As has been taught of old.

10. For in this way only may man have a communion with the Gods, for the Gods cannot help men without the help of man.

11. And the High Priestess shall rule Her Coven as the representative of the Goddess.

12. And the High Priest shall support Her as the representative of the God.

13. And the High Priestess shall choose whom She will, if he have sufficient rank, to be Her High Priest.

14. For, as the God himself kissed Her feet in the Fivefold salute, laying His power at the feet of the Goddess, because of Her youth and beauty, Her sweetness and kindness, Her wisdom and Her justice, Her humility and gentleness and generosity,

15. So He resigned all His power to Her.

16. But the High Priestess should ever mind that all power comes from Him.

17. It is only lent, to be used wisely and justly.

18. And the greatest virtue of a High Priestess be that She recognizes that youth is necessary to the representative of the Goddess.

19. So will She gracefully retire in favor of a younger woman, should the Coven so decide in council.

20. For the true High Priestess realizes that gracefully surrendering the pride of place is one of the greatest virtues.

21. And that thereby will She return to that pride of place in another life, with greater power and beauty.

22. In the old days, when Witches extended far, we were free and worshipped in all the greatest temples.

23. But, in these unhappy times, we must celebrate our Sacred Mysteries in secret.

24. So be it ardane, that none but the Wicca may see our mysteries, for our enemies are many and torture loosens the tongue of men.

25. So be it ardane, that no Coven shall know where the next Coven bide.

26. Or who its members be, save only the Priest and Priestess and the Messenger.

27. And there shall be no communication between them, save only by the Messenger of the Gods, or the Summoner.

28. And only if it be safe may the Covens meet in some safe place for the Great Festivals.

29. And while there, none shall say whence they come, nor give their true names.

30. To this end, that if any be tortured, in their agony, they may not tell if they do not know.

31. So be it ardane, that no one shall tell anyone, not of the Craft, who be of the Wicca, or give any names, or where any abide, or in any way tell anything which can betray any of us to our faces.

32. Nor may he tell where the Covendom be.

33. Or the Covenstead.

34. Or where the meetings be.

35. And if any break these Laws, even under torture, the Curse of the Goddess shall be upon them, so they may never be reborn on earth, and may they remain where they belong, in the Hell of the Christians.

36. Let each High Priestess govern Her Coven with justice and love, with the help and advice of the High Priest and the Elders, always heeding the advice of the Messenger of the Gods if He comes.

37. She will heed all complaints of all Brothers and strive to settle all differences among them.

38. But it must be recognized that there will always be people who will ever strive to force others to do as they will.

39. These are not necessarily evil.

40. And they oft have good ideas, and such ideas should be talked over in council.

41. But, if they will not agree with their Brothers or if they say:

42. "I will not work under this High Priestess."

43. It hath ever been the Old Law, to be convenient for the Brethren, and to avoid disputes.

44. Any of the third may claim to found a new Coven, because they live over a league from the Covenstead or are about to do so.

45. Anyone living within the Covendom and wishing to form a new Coven shall tell the Elders of their intentions and on the instant avoid their dwelling and remove to a new Covendom.

46. Members of the old Coven may join the new one when it is formed, but if they do they must utterly avoid the old Coven.

47. The Elders of the old and new Covens should meet in peace and brotherly love to decide the new boundaries.

48. Those of the Craft who live outside both Covens may join either indifferent, but not both.

49. Though all may, if the Elders agree, meet for the Great Festivals, if it be truly in peace and brotherly love.

50. But splitting the Coven oft means strife, so for this reason these Laws were made of old, and may the Curse of the Goddess be on any who disregard them!

51. If you would keep a book (your Black Book) let it be in your own hand of write, let Brothers and Sisters copy what they will, but never let the book out of your hands and never keep the writings of another.

52. For if it be in their hand of write, they may be taken and engaged.

53. Let each guard his own writings, and destroy them whenever danger threatens.

54. Learn as much as you may by heart, and when danger is past, rewrite your book when it be safe.

55. For this reason, if any die, destroy their book, an they have not been able to.

56. For, an it be found, 'tis clear proof against them.

57. And our oppressors know well: "Ye may not be a Witch alone."

58. So all their kin and friend be in danger of torture.

59. So destroy everything not necessary.

60. If your book be found on you, 'tis clear proof against you alone. You may be engaged.

61. Keep all thoughts of the Craft from your mind.

62. If the torture be too great to bear, say: "I will confess. I cannot bear this torture. What do you want me to say?"

63. If they try to make you talk of the Brotherhood, do not.

64. But if they try to make you speak of impossibilities such as flying through the air, consorting with the Christian Devil, or sacrificing children or eating men's flesh,

65. To obtain relief from the torture, say, "I hold an evil dream, I was beside myself, I was crazed.:

66. Not all the magistrates are bad; if there be any excuse, they may show mercy.

67. If you have confessed ought, deny it afterwards. Say you babbled under the torture, say you do not know what you said.

68. If you are condemned, fear not.

69. Fear not, the Brotherhood is powerful, they will help you to escape if you stand steadfast.

70. But if you betray ought, there is no hope for you in this life or that to come.

71. Be sure, if steadfast you go to the pyre, drugs will reach you, you will feel naught. You but go to death and what lies beyond.

72. To avoid discovery, let the working tools be as ordinary things that any may have in their houses.

73. Let the Pentacles be of wax so that they may be broken at once or melted.

74. Have no sword, unless your rank allows you one.

75. Have no names or signs on anything.

76. Write the names or signs on them in ink immediately before consecrating them, and wash it off immediately afterwards.

77. Do not engrave them lest they cause discovery.

78. Let the color of the hilts tell which is which.

79. Ever remember, ye are the "Hidden Children of the Goddess," so never do anything to disgrace them or her.

80. Never boast, never threaten, never say you would wish ill of anyone.

81. If any person, not in the magic circle, speak of the Craft say, "Speak not to me of such, it frightens me. 'Tis evil luck to speak of it."

82. For this reason: the Christians have their spied everywhere. These speak as if they were well affected to us, as if they would come to our meetings saying, "My mother used to go worship the Old Ones. I would I could go myself."

83. To such as these, ever deny all knowledge.

84. But to others, ever say, "'Tis foolish talk of Witches flying through the air. To do so they must be light as thistledown. And men say that Witches all be so bleary-eyed, old crones, so what pleasure can there be at a Witch meeting such as folks talk on?"

85. And say "Many wise men now say there be no such creatures."

86. Ever make it a jest and in some future time, perhaps, the persecution may die and we may worship our Gods in safety again.

87. Let us all pray for that happy day.

88. May the blessings of the Goddess and God be on all who keep these Laws which are ardane.

89. If the Craft have any Appendage, let all guard it, and help to keep it clear and good for the Craft.

90. And let all justly guard all moneys of the Craft.

91. But if any brother truly wrought it, 'tis right they have their pay, and it be just. And this be not taking money for the Art, but for good and honest work.

92. And ever the Christians say, "The laborer is worthy of his hire" but if any brother work willingly for the good of the Craft without pay, 'tis to their greatest honor.

93. If there be any quarrels or disputes among the brethren the High Priestess shall straightway convene the Elders and inquire into the matter and they shall hear both sides, first alone, then together.

94. And they shall decide justly, not favoring the one side or the other.

95. Ever recognizing there be people who can never agree to work under others.

96. But at the same time, there be some people who cannot rule justly.

97. To those who ever must be chief, there is one answer.

98. Void the Coven, or seek another one or make a Coven of your own, taking with you those who will go.

99. To those who cannot rule justly the answer be, "Those who cannot bear your rule will leave you."

100. For none may come to meetings with those with whom they are at variance.

101. So, an either cannot agree, "Get hence, for the Craft must ever survive."

102. In the olden days, when we had power, we could use the Art against any who ill-treated the Brotherhood. But in these evil days, we must not do so! For our enemies have devised a burning pit of everlasting fire, into which they say their God casteth all the people who worship Him, except it be the very few who are released by their priest's spells and masses. And this be chiefly by giving moneys and rich gifts to receive His favor, for their God is ever in need of money.

103. But as our Gods need our aid to make fertility for man and crops, so it is the God of the Christians ever is in need of man's help to search out and destroy us. Their priests ever tell them that any who get our help are damned to this Hell forever, so men be mad with the terror of it.

104. But they make men believe that they may escape this Hell if they give Witches to the tormentors. So for this reason, all be forever spying, thinking, "An I catch but one of the Wicca, I will escape this fiery pit."

105. So for this reason we have our hidels, and men searching long and not finding say, "There be none, or if there be, they be in a far country."

106. But when one of our oppressors dies, or even be sick, ever is the cry, "This be Witches' malice," and the hunt is up again and though they slay ten of their own to one of ours, still they care not. They have countless thousands.

107. While we are few indeed.

108. That none shall use the Art in any way to do ill to any.

109. However much they injure us, HARM NONE and now times many believe we exist not.

110. That this Law shall ever continue to help us in our plight. No one, however great an injury or injustice they receive, may use the Art in any way to do ill or harm any. But they may, after great consultations with all, use the Art to restrain Christians from harming us or tax others, but only to let or constrain them.

111. To this end, men will say: "Such a one is a mighty searcher out and a persecutor of old women whom they deemeth to be Witches, and none hath done him skith, so they be proof they cannot, or more truly where be none."

112. For all know full well, that so many folk have died because someone had a grudge against them, or were persecuted because they had money or goods to seize, or because they had none to bribe the searchers. And many have died because they were scolding old women. So much that men now say that "only old women are Witches."

113. And this be to our advantage, and turns suspicions away from us.

114. In England and Scotland, 'tis now many a year since a Witch hath died the death. But the misuse of the power might raise the persecution again.

115. So never break this Law, however much you are tempted, and never consent to it being broken in the least.

116. If you know it is being broken, you must work strongly against it.

117. And any High Priestess who consents to its breach must immediately be deposed. "For 'tis the blood of the Brethren they endanger."

118. Do good, an it be safe and only if it be safe.

119. And strictly keep to the old Law.

120. Never accept money for the use of the Art. For money ever smeareth the taker. '"Tis sorcerers and conjurers and priests of the Christians who ever accept money for the use of their Arts. And they sell dwale, and evil loves spells and pardons, so let men escape from their sins."

121. Be not as these. If you accept no money, you will be free from temptation to use the Art for evil courses.

122. All may use the Art for their own advantage, or for the advantage of the Craft, only if you are sure you harm none.

123. But ever let the Coven debate this at length. Only if all be satisfied and none be harmed may the Art be used.

124. If it is not possible to achieve your ends one way, perchance the aim may be achieved by acting in a different way, so as to harm none. May the Curse of the Goddess be on any who breaketh this Law.

125. 'Tis judged lawful if any of the Craft need a house or land and none will sell, to incline the owner's mind so as to be willing to sell, providing it harmeth it not in anyway and the full price is paid, without haggling.

126. Never bargain or cheapen anything whilst you live by the Art.

127. 'Tis the old Law and the most important of all Laws that no one may do anything which will endanger any of the Craft, or bring them into contact with the law of the land, or any of our persecutors.

128. In any disputes between the brethren, no one may invoke any Laws but those of the Craft.

129. Or any tribunal but that of the Priestess, Priest and Elders. And may the Curse of the Goddess be on any who do so.

130. It is not forbidden to say as Christians do: "There be Witchcraft in the land," because our oppressors of old make it heresy not to believe in Witchcraft, and so a crime to deny it, which thereby puts you under suspicion.

131. But ever say "I know not of it here, perchance there may be, but afar off - I know not where."

132. But ever speak of those as old crones, consorting with the Devil and riding through the air.

133. But ever say: "But how many men may ride through the air an they be not light as thistledown?"

134. But the Curse of the Goddess be on any who cast any suspicion on any of the Brotherhood.

135. Or who speaks of any real meeting place where any abide.

136. Let the Craft keep books with the names of all herbs which are good for men, and all cures, so all may learn.

137. But keep another book with all the Bales and Apies and let only the Elders and other trustworthy people have this knowledge.

138. Remember the Art is the secret of the Gods and only may be used in earnest and never for show or pride, or vainglory.

139. Magicians and Christians may taunt us saying, "You have no power. Do magic before our eyes. Then only will we believe." Seeking to cause us to betray our Art before them.

140. Heed them not. For the Art is holy, and may only be used in need. And the Curse of the Gods be on any who break this Law.

141. It ever be the way with women, and with men also that they ever seek new love..

142. Nor should we reprove them for this.

143. But it may be found to the disadvantage of the Craft.

144. As, so many a time it has happened that a High Priest or High Priestess impelled by love, hath departed with their love, that is, they have left the Coven.

145. Now if a High Priestess wishes to resign, they may do so in full Coven.

146. And this resignation is valid.

147. But if they should run off without resigning, who may know if they may not return within a few months.

148. So the Law is: If a High Priestess leaves her Coven, but returns within the space of a year and a day, then she shall be taken back and all shall be as before.

149. Meanwhile, if she has a deputy, that deputy shall act as High Priestess for as long as the High Priestess is away.

150. If she returns not at the end of a year and a day, then shall the Coven elect a new High Priestess.

151. Unless there be a good reason to the contrary, the person who has done the work should reap the benefit of the reward.

152. If somebody else is elected, the deputy is made maiden and deputy of the High Priestess.

153. It hath been found that practicing the Art doth cause a fondness between aspirant and tutor, and it is the cause of better results if this be so.

154. But if for any reason this be undesirable, it can easily be avoided by both persons from the outset firmly resolving in their minds that if any such ensure, it shall be that of brother and sister, or parent and child.

155. And it is for this reason that a man may be taught by a woman and a woman by a man and that woman and woman and man and man should never attempt these practices together.

156. And may all the Curses of the Mighty Ones be on any who make such an attempt.

157. Order and discipline must be kept.

158. A High Priestess or a High Priest may and should punish all faults.

159. To this end: all the Craft must receive their correction willingly.

160. All, properly prepared, the culprit kneeling, should be told his fault, and his sentence pronounced.

161. Punishment should be the $ followed by something amusing such as several S S S S, or something of this nature.

162. The culprit must acknowledge the justice of the punishment by kissing the hand of the Priestess and by kissing the $ on receiving sentence; and again thanking for punishment received.

163.

So Be It Ardane.

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Last modified: August 19 2018 14:57:14